

News Release

U of M Crookston Students Return from Three Week Cultural Experience in China

By Itollefs on Tuesday, June 21, 2011

Eight University of Minnesota, Crookston students studied abroad in China for three weeks as a cultural immersion experience through the university. Cities visited in China included Beijing, Hangzhou, and Shanghai. Students were overseas from Monday, May 16 through Tuesday, June 7, 2011.



The time abroad was part of the curriculum of the GNED 3000 Global Seminar course taught by Associate Professor Soo-Yin Lim-Thompson. This three credit spring course fulfilled the liberal education requirement of global perspectives. The course was not major exclusive and encompassed a wide variety of career interests. The time abroad was about more than site seeing; the goal was to experience history, language, food, relational and cultural aspects of China.

Students in the Global Seminar course included Kristine Neu, senior, Pelican Rapids, Minn., majoring in horticulture and communication; Donna Malarkey, junior, Crookston, Minn., majoring in quality management; James Kriegh, junior, Crookston, Minn., majoring in software engineering; Allison Schumacher, senior, Crookston, Minn., majoring in sport and recreation management; Rob Canny, senior, Oshkosh, Wis., majoring in business management; Levi Atinda, sophomore, Maple Grove, Minn., majoring in biology; Sang Jun "Jeff" Lee, freshman, Incheon, Korea, majoring in business management; and Alysha Thielen, junior, Maple Grove, Minn., majoring in animal science.

Beijing was the first city visited during the three weeks abroad. Students were climbing the Great Wall of China on their first day in the country. It was a once in a lifetime experience that tested everyone's endurance. Other stops in Beijing include the 2008 Olympic Village, the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, the Temple of Heaven, and the Summer Palace. The time spent in Beijing was filled with historic cultural experiences that allowed students to become part of China's long, rich history.

Hangzhou was where the students spent the majority of their trip. The city is famous for West Lake, which is a fresh water lake approximately 2.3 square miles in area. Students were able to take a boat ride around the lake to absorb the sites of Hangzhou. Further appreciation of West Lake was instilled after the viewing of West Lake Impression, which is a theatrical performance set on the lake that encompasses music and lights to tell a Romeo and Juliet story of China.



While in Hangzhou students learned about Chinese commodities including tea and silk through visits to the Mei jia wu tea village, the China National Tea Museum, and the China National Silk Museum. Other visits in Hangzhou included the Six Harmonies Pagoda overlooking the Qiantang River, the Ling Yin Temple, Hu Xue Yan's Former Residence, and He Fang Street which is a noted shopping area.



To give U of M, Crookston students the opportunity to truly be international students, the time in Hangzhou included a one week stay at Zhejiang Agriculture & Forestry University (ZAFU). Students stayed on campus and were able to experience housing, meals, classes, and student life. ZAFU provided instructors for a variety of topics related to Chinese culture including language, history, tea culture, calligraphy & painting, traditional medicine, folk music, tai chi, and martial arts. This was a valuable portion of the trip as it allowed the U of M, Crookston students to learn what it is like to be an international student in China as well as compare and contrast the university systems between the two countries.

Another university visit was made by the students as they spent a day at Zhejiang Economic & Trade Polytechnic (ZJETP) which was the host university for the three week trip in China. Students were treated to a campus tour and had the chance to interact with ZJETP students who were interested in future study in America. University President Shuming Li formally recognized each U of M, Crookston student and presented them with a certificate of completion for their time abroad. President Li also

treated to the students to a gracious Chinese meal for which they were joined by three U of M, Crookston professors. Business Department Head Dr. Susan Brorson, Associate Professor Margot Rudstrom, Associate Professor Jingpeng Tang, were each teaching Chinese students at ZJETP during the same time frame.

As the students traveled from Hangzhou they spent a day in Wuzhen Town in Tongxiang City. Wuzhen Town has a history of over 1,000 years and is a town built on the water. The students were able to walk the narrow streets and venture into various buildings to learn about the culture and history of the town. A boat ride on the canal through the town took students under the many bridges that span the vast amount of water. It was a quiet stop that allowed the students to see a less urbanized place in China.

The three week journey in China ended in Shanghai and gave students the opportunity to see a westernized city in Asia. U of M, Crookston students were able to overlook the city from the Oriental Pearl TV Tower which is the third tallest TV tower in the world. Time was spent on Nanking Road, the famous shopping district in Shanghai, as well as the Bund which runs along the western bank of the Huangpu River. A highlight of being in Shanghai was a nighttime boat tour along the Huangpu which allowed students to see the millions of lights from the buildings and skyscrapers of Shanghai.

This was the third time the U of M, Crookston has sent students to study in China. The study abroad experience is the result of an international partnership that was formed in 2005 with Zhejiang Economic & Trade Polytechnic (ZJETP), a three year university in Hangzhou, China. ZJETP serves as the primary coordinator for the U of M, Crookston's time in China. U of M, Crookston also has an exchange agreement with Zhejiang Agriculture & Forestry University and hosts students from ZAFU at the U of M, Crookston each year. Further collaboration with Zhejiang Agriculture & Forestry University (ZAFU), a four year university in Zhejiang province, provides a week of cultural classes for U of M, Crookston students and allows for immersion in a higher education program in China. Through the Global Seminar course the U of M, Crookston has sent students to China in 2008, 2009, and 2011. For more information about studying abroad visit www.umcrookston.edu/learningabroad.

Today the University of Minnesota, Crookston delivers 29 bachelor's degree programs, 18 minors, and more than 40 concentrations, including several online degrees, in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of about 1,400 undergraduates from more than 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

In the photo, top, right: U of M, Crookston students prior to climbing up the Great Wall of China. Front row, l to r: Kristine Neu, Donna Malarkey, James Kriegh, Allison Schumacher, Professor Soo-Yin Lim-Thompson, Xie "Sara" Yu (2009 alumni), Back row: Rob Canny, Levi Atinda, Sang Jun "Jeff" Lee, Alysha Thielen

In the photo, bottom, right: Exploring caves near Ying Lin Temple outside of Hangzhou, China, are Allison Schumacher (left) and Kristine Neu.

In the photo, bottom, left: Levi Atinda, taking part in a tea culture class at Zhejiang Agriculture & Forestry University (ZAFU).

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